

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6542

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, SP

SUBJ: SPANISH GOVERNMENT TAKES ACTION AGAINST NUEVO DIARIO
FOR CALUMNIOUS ARTICLE AGAINST UNITED STATES

1. UNDERSECRETARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS ROVIRA CALLED ME THIS EVENING TO TELL ME THAT THE MINISTRY INFORMATION HAD DECIDED TO TAKE ACTION UNDER ARTICLE 2 OF THE PRESS LAW AGAINST MADRID DAILY NUEVO DIARIO FOR WHAT HE TERMED AN INSULTING ARTICLE PUBLISHED BY THAT NEWSPAPER AGAINST THE UNITED STATES TODAY. ROVIRA SAID THAT AS SOON AS HE SAW THE ARTICLE HE CALLED THE UNDERSECRETARY OF INFORMATION TO DISCUSS IT WITH HIM AND THAT IT HAD THEN BEEN DECIDED THAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY WAS ASHAMED THAT SUCH AN ARTICLE SHOULD HAVE BEEN PRINTED. IT WAS ONE THING FOR THE PRESS TO BE FREE; IT WAS ANOTHER THING FOR IT TO BE IRRESPONSIBLE.

2. I THANKED UNDERSECRETARY ROVIRA, AND TOLD HIM THAT I HAD NOT YET SEEN TODAY'S NUEVO DIARIO.

3. NUEVO DIARIO IS A THIRD-RATE NEWSPAPER FORMERLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF LOPEZ RODO AND NOW UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE WEALTHY URQUIJO FAMILY. ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO IT HIRED AN AGGRESSIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL EDITOR BY THE NAME OF MARTIN FERRAND TO TRY TO GET OFF THE GROUND AND GAIN CIRCULATION. MARTIN FERRAND IS THE AUTHOR OF THE ARTICLE IN QUESTION.

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4. THE ARTICLE IS HEADED "GOODBYE MR. MARSHALL." IT BEGINS BY RECALLING THAT IN 1898 WHEN THE MAINE WAS BLOWN UP ALL MADRID NEWSPAPERMEN EXCEPT ONE WERE SADDENED. THAT ONE, LUIS BONAFOUX CALLED FOR HAPPINESS OVER THE EVENT AND WROTE: "THE UNITED STATES IS A REPULSIVE COUNTRY IN ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THAT HAS NOT HAD THE COURAGE TO EXPROPRIATE (SIC) FROM SPAIN OR THE GREATNESS TO FIGHT FOR CUBA AS FRANCE FOUGHT FOR THE UNITED STATES. THE LAFAYETTES AND THE BYRONS HAVE NOT BECOME ACLIMATIZED IN THAT COUNTRY OF MERCHANTS WHO AWAIT THE EXHAUSTION OF SPAIN AND THE RUIN OF CUBA TO CAW OVER THE REMAINS AS THE RAVENS CAW OVER THE MAST OF THE MAINE..."

5. FERRAND CONTINUES THAT SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS AFTERWARDS, WHEN SOME SADNESS IS BEING SHOWN AT THE END OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES, HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE STYLE AND WRITING ABILITY OF BONAFOUX TO SAY AGAIN "THE UNITED STATES IS A REPULSIVE COUNTRY IN ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS." HE ENDS "TODAY ONE WOULD NOT TALK OF CUBA, FOR ROTA, MORON AND TORREJON ARE MUCH NEARER."

5. ARTICLE 2 OF THE PRESS LAW PROVIDES AMONG THE RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT OF DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION "THE REQUIREMENTS OF NATIONAL DEFENSE THE SECURITY OF THE NATION AND THE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL PUBLIC ORDER AND EXTERNAL PEACE."

6. I ASKED ROVIRA WHAT SANCTIONS WOULD BE APPLIED BUT HE DID NOT APPEAR TO KNOW. POSSIBLE SANCTIONS INCLUDE SUSPENSION OR FINING OF THE AUTHOR, AND SUSPENSION AND/OR FINING OF THE PAPER.

7. THIS INCIDENT DOUBTLESS WILL RECEIVE WIDE PRESS PLAY. IT WILL BE IMPORTANT THAT IT IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD IN THAT PRESS PLAY THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR THE ACTION AGAINST NUEVO DIARIO CAME SPONTANEOUSLY FROM THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT AND NOT AS THE RESULT OF A COMPLAINT FROM THE UNITED STATES. WE PLAN TO REFER ANY INQUIRES REGARDING THE INCIDENT TO THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT.

8. I PROBABLY WILL SEE BOTH ROVIRA AND FOREIGN MINISTER
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CORTINA AT THE AIRPORT TOMORROW AT THE TIME OF CORTINA'S DEPARTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES. I WOULD PLAN TO SAY THAT AFTER READING THE ARTICLE I CERTAINLY AGREE THAT IT IS DISPICABLE AND THAT I APPRECIATE THE CONCERN THE MINISTRY HAS SHOWN.
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